



**The House of Representatives  
STATE OF HAWAII**

**NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release  
February 23, 2006

Media Assistance: Georgette Deemer  
T. 586-6133; C. 341-5043

**HOUSE FINANCE ADVANCES EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL SERVICES FUNDING**

**Honolulu.** Measures related to funding emergency medical services across the state passed the House Finance Committee today. With the Queen's Medical Center Emergency helipad as a backdrop, lawmakers and EMS representatives held a news conference to explain the pressing need for emergency services, especially in rural areas of the state, and how the lack of services jeopardizes the health and safety of residents in these areas.

"There are not too many issues of life and death before the legislature, but this is one of them," said Representative Marilyn Lee, who introduced a bill along with Representative Ryan Yamane to fund a 16-hour emergency services ambulance for the Mililani and Mililani Mauka community. "Many people don't think of emergency services until tragedy or disaster strikes. A responsible government is prepared to respond to emergencies in order to save lives."

The legislative appropriations would cover ambulance service, helicopter service, and emergency mobile care units in areas on Oahu, the Big Island and Maui.

For rural Oahu, the community was previously served by an aeromedical helicopter based at Wheeler Army Air Field. However, due to the increased military activity in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq, the helicopter may soon be deployed to those areas, leaving rural Oahu residents without aeromedical services.

In isolated areas where there is a lack of hospitals and health centers, such as in the southern portion of the island of Hawaii, residents of the area are particularly vulnerable in the event of a serious medical emergency. Lawmakers believe that the most efficient solution is to provide two emergency mobile urgent care units to be stationed at the fire departments in the communities of Ocean View and Volcano.

(more)

The Haiku region of Maui, as another example, needs a twenty-four-hour, locally-based, advanced life support ambulance service. The nearest ambulance service is located in Makawao, which is forty-five minutes away. The next closest ambulance service is in Hana, a full ninety minutes away. Both wait times are considered unacceptably long and endanger the health of residents of the Haiku community.

The package of emergency medical services legislation now goes before the full House for a vote and then crosses over the Senate for consideration.

Following is a summary of the bills passed in the Finance Committee this morning:

**HB2376 MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM BRANCH.** Makes an emergency appropriation for FY 2006 to pay for various costs relating to emergency medical services. (Contact: Rep. Dennis Arakaki 586-6050)

**HB2126 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.** Appropriates funds for a 16-hour emergency medical services ambulance for the Mililani/Mililani Mauka area. (Contact: Rep. Marilyn Lee 586-9460 and Rep. Ryan Yamane 586-6150)

**HB2187 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.** Appropriates funds to Department of Health to contract with a government agency or U.S. military branch to provide intra-island only roto-wing aeromedical services for rural Oahu. (Contact: Rep. Mike Magaoay 586-6380)

**HB2526 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION AS A GRANT-IN-AID TO THE COUNTY OF HAWAII FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PERSONNEL TO STAFF THE AEROMEDICAL HELICOPTER UNIT.** Appropriates funds as a grant-in-aid to Hawaii county for dedicated emergency medical service personnel to staff the aeromedical helicopter unit on the island of Hawaii. (Contact: Rep. Dennis Arakaki 586-6050)

**HB1975 RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.** Appropriates funds to place emergency mobile urgent care units in the Ocean View and Volcano communities of the island of Hawaii. (Contact: Rep. Bob Herkes 586-8400)

**HB2884 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR AMBULANCE SERVICE FOR THE HAIKU REGION OF MAUI.** Appropriates funds in FY2006-2007 for ambulance service in the Haiku region of Maui. (Contact: Rep. Mele Carroll 586-6790)

###